

December 2, 1959

Dr. L. S. Baron  
Department of Bacterial Physiology  
Army Medical Center  
Army Medical Service Graduate School  
Washington 12, D. C.

Dear Lou:

Thank you very much for the abstract. I don't know the data on the base composition of *Serratia* and therefore find it hard to judge the applicability of Lanni's criterion, even if it were a valid one. Since *Serratia* is classified as one of the enteric bacteria, I would already have thought it remarkable if there were an outstanding discrepancy. It will, of course, be extremely interesting to see if you can find the genetic basis of base composition. It might turn out that this is controlled, as a whole, by a single gene or chromosome segment rather than autonomously for each part of the genome. This would be such a remarkable and important result that it would be very well worth pursuing in detail. To pursue another point, I think it might be important to find out whether the *Serratia* hybrids have incorporated or recombined chromosome segments from *E. coli* or merely have an extrachromosomal fragment.

Yours as ever,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

P.S. Esther had some difficulty in isolating good mutants of TM-9, as you know, but she tells me that she does have some and will send these as soon as she can get out from under. Is TM-9 especially advantageous as compared to TM-2?